



A Monthly Report from the Office of Mayor Lawrence J. Morrissey

The **Rockford Progress** is a monthly operations report designed to provide informative updates regarding City municipal operations, capital improvement program activities, economic development activities, and other special events and news of note. I hope you will find it informative and comprehensive as to the progress we continue to strive for as an organization and as a community in our journey of achieving our mission of “*Excellence Everywhere for Everyone*”.

- Jim Ryan, City Administrator

ROCKStat in Review

PUBLIC SAFETY HIGHLIGHTS

Rockford Violent Crime Down 10%; Shots Fired/Aggravated Battery Down 28%

Police Services— Through the end of October, Group A offenses have dropped approximately 8% from the same time period from 2013. City-wide, violent crime has dropped 10.2%, while property crimes have dropped 9% year-to-date from 2013. Aggravated battery/shots fired incidents have continued to decrease dramatically by 28% from 2013 during this same time period. Burglary incidents are down approximately 12.4%, while robbery incidents are up almost 7%. Auto thefts and burglary to motor vehicle/theft to motor vehicle are down 6% respectively since 2013. Traffic fatalities have also decreased dramatically (-57%) from a year ago. Recidivism of crime incidents continues to be a problem in our community, as parolees arrested through October of 2014 are up 46% from 2013. On a positive note, the number of adult probationers arrested has slightly decreased year-to-date from 2013, and juvenile probationers arrested this year has dropped 15% from 2013. Another highlight city-wide is that self-initiated calls for service by police officers have increased 10.5% from 2013, a good indicator of proactive community policing. Domestic-related crime incidents currently represent 20% of all crime incidents year-to-date, an increase of 6.4% over last year during this same time period. For violent crime during the month of October, 28.5% of all violent crime was domestic related, an increase of 4.3%. This must continue to be an area of focus for our Department and our community. At the District level, Group A offenses are down approximately 5.6% in District 1, with violent crime down approximately 7.6%, and property crimes down 10.7% from last year. In District 2, Group A offenses are down 8%, with violent crime down approximately 7% and property crimes down 6%. In District 3, Group A offenses are down 7%, with violent crime falling by 8.7% and property crimes falling nearly 8% from a year ago.



PUBLIC SAFETY HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

Recidivism Continues to be a Challenge in Rockford Community

Through October, 622 arrests were made to adults who were already on probation for previous arrests, down 0.3% from 2013. Adult probationer arrests represent 8% of total arrests this year. A total of 150 juveniles who were on probation were arrested this year, down over 10% from 2013, representing 2% of all arrested in 2013. Parolee arrests, those returning from the Illinois Department of Corrections, totaled 270, up dramatically in 2014 by 46%. Cumulatively, individuals who were already on probation or parole and who were re-arrested in 2014 represents over 13% of total arrests in 2014.

The Rockford Police Department and the Rockford Area Violence Elimination Network (RAVEN), along with other City, government, and community partners, continue to hold monthly call-ins for violent offenders who have returned to the community from the Illinois Department of Corrections. Working with Rockford Human Services and Lutheran Social Services for case management, 207 individuals on parole have attended the call-ins. Of those, 60 have voluntarily participated in the voluntary case-management program. Positive outcomes have been yielded from the case management program, with only 7 (11.7%) re-offending who were case managed, and none of them were violent crime arrests. Of those opting out of case management, 57 have re-offended, 7 being for violent crimes, including two that were homicides.

Given the positive results of the case management program, Mayor Morrissey and Police Chief Epperson are still awaiting a response from S.A. Godinez, Director of the Illinois Department of Corrections, requesting that the IDOC make it a condition of parole for citizens returning to Rockford that case management in the Rockford Re-entry Program be mandatory.

City Fire Incidents Decline Continues; EMS Search & Rescues up 5%

Fire/Emergency Medical Services— Through October, the Rockford Fire Department has conducted 17,173 EMS and Search and Rescue incidents, up 4.8% from the same time last year. One highlight is that total fire incidents have dropped by 19% from last year, and structure fires have decreased by 11%. The largest decline continues to be outside fire incidents, dropping 28% from last year at this time. Public education activities have almost tripled over last year, with the Department providing outreach to 36,569 people through the end of October. Total 911 calls have dropped by 3,127 calls this year, a decline of approximately 3%.

Other news of note: Rockford Fire conducted Ebola Response training for fire and 911 personnel, and NIMS 300 and 400 training was completed for personnel on promotional lists. Congratulations to the Department for raising over \$28,000 for the United Way, more than double last year's donation level.



PUBLIC WORKS HIGHLIGHTS

Transportation & Forestry Services — Through the end of October, the Street and Forestry Division have fielded 2,870 pothole requests, completing 98% of them. During the same performance period in 2013, the Division fielded 2,888 pothole requests, completing 92% through the end of October. Overall, pothole requests have continued to decline due to an aggressive capital improvement program that is improving the overall transportation system.

Progress continues in the Forestry Division as they combat the Emerald Ash Borer that has decimated thousands of trees in the Forest City. At the end of October 2013, there were 118 open forestry requests. Since April of this year, 1,978 trees have been trimmed, 937 trees have been removed, and 591 trees have been planted. Traffic operations response time was down in October, with only 67% of signals replaced compared to reported. Signal bulb outages were completed within 24 hours, meeting the performance standard at 96%. Sign repair and replacement goals during the month of October improved dramatically over last month, meeting their benchmark 99% of the time. The Fall street sweeping cycle was 60% complete as of the end of October.

Graffiti Abatement Services — Graffiti cases are down 2% from last year, with 540 cases being reported. Average removal time is 1.1 days. In the past three months, graffiti has decreased by 27%. As of the end of October, two arrests have been made by the Rockford Police Department, and there are 24 active police investigations. Gang graffiti represents 54% of all graffiti cases. The City has a zero tolerance for graffiti in the City. We encourage residents and businesses to call the Graffiti Hotline at 815-961-3243.

Water Division Services— Emergency repairs for getting water back on after repairs has been decreased to less than 1-hour in October, the best performance time recorded this year after major winter repairs from 2013/2014. In addition, the average number of days needed to correct a meter problem also dropped to its lowest level in 2014 to 24 days. Due to mild weather and lower water usage, operating revenue as a percentage of plan has continued to decline from a high of 104% in July to 80% in October. Cumulatively, the Water Division is at 99% of planned operating revenues for the year.

Water quality is a priority for the Rockford water system. To-date, the City's water laboratory has conducted over 35,000 tests for pH, phosphate, chlorine, iron, and manganese. In addition, 460 tests have been conducted for volatile organic compounds (VOCs), radium, inorganics, and nitrates, and over 2,220 bacteriological tests to ensure that our citizens have the highest quality drinking water, all at affordable prices.



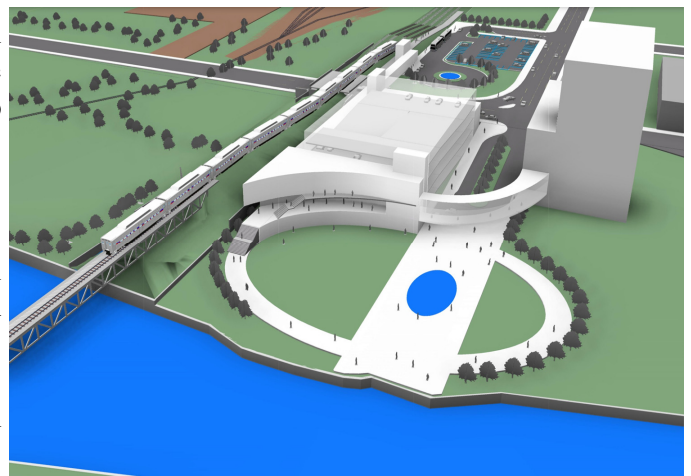
PUBLIC WORKS HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

Engineering/Capital Improvement Services — The following are highlights of major projects in progress and under development:

Buildings/Facilities

- **Fire Station 3:** Construction is on schedule for the new Fire Station 3 located on Marchesano Drive. The facility is under roof for winter, and work will continue on the interior through the winter season. This will be a state-of-the-art facility that will serve the citizens of southwest Rockford for the next fifty years.
- **Geographic Police Facilities:** The City Council has purchased the former New Towne Post Office site for the future Police District 3 and architectural services are scheduled to begin in December for bidding in late Spring. The former Turner School site located on Broadway has been selected for Police District 2, and a Preliminary Development Agreement is moving through the City Council approval process for the development of this facility in cooperation with Rockford Local Development Corporation. The City-owned property located at the West State and Avon Street has been selected for a new Police District 1 station. An architectural services contract will be considered by City Council in December for design services to begin at this location. The goal is to complete construction of Police Districts 1 and 3 by January 1, 2016, and completion of District 2 by Fall 2016.
- **Amtrak:** A Community Engagement meeting was held in November to provide the community with different design concepts for consideration by the community and the Rockford City Council (photo at right is one option presented).

Work continues with the State on developing reconstruction plans for the main line of the Union Pacific, which will include a new bridge deck over South Main Street to accommodate the train traffic and station platform. Work continues behind the scenes on land acquisition and environmental due diligence for the potential properties where the station is to be located.





PUBLIC WORKS HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

Buildings/Facilities

- **Downtown Sportscore on the Rock:** Final grant funds have been received for the project, and the designs for the center are 95% complete. Final Bond approval for the project will receive final consideration by Rockford City Council on December 1st. The goal is to bid the project in December and to begin construction in January.
- **Concourse Parking Garage:** Proposals were received by the City and County for a design-build option to repair the Concourse Parking Garage. Design contractors have been interviewed, and reference checks are currently underway. The City and County are meeting with regard to potential finance and ownership options. Recommendations for a design engineer and improvements are slated to be presented to City Council in December.
- **Outdoor Market:** Demolition of the Water Street parking deck was completed, and parking lot construction is underway, albeit is hampered by premature winter weather. Larson and Darby is working on the plans for the architectural elements of the outdoor market (i.e. pavilion) so that it can be bid over winter and constructed in the spring to be completed for the 2015 City Market season.
- **Indoor Market:** The City and Rock River Development Partnership are finalizing a sub-grantee agreement for Illinois DCEO approval. Once approved, full design for this project will commence.

Major Highway Corridor Improvements

- **West State Phase 1—** Final restoration for the project is being finalized before Winter. Additional landscaping and park development will occur in the Spring of 2015. The second phase of West State construction, from Independence to Day, is slated to begin late summer of 2015. Land acquisition is underway.
- **South Main Corridor Improvements—**The reconstruction of South Main from US Bypass 20 to Harrison is substantially complete. Final bike path construction is complete and landscaping remains for the Spring. South Main reconstruction from Harrison to Morgan is well underway, and all four lanes and median construction should be substantially completed by the end of the year, but weather has hampered progress in November. Final work won't be completed until next year. The final section of South Main, from Morgan to Cedar Street, will begin next year. Plans for the two-way conversion of South Main from Wyman to Cedar are underway and will be ready for bidding and construction for the 2015 construction season.
- **Harrison Avenue Corridor—** The Harrison Avenue Bridge over the Rock River is approximately 95% complete and will be finished by winter of this year.



PUBLIC WORKS HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

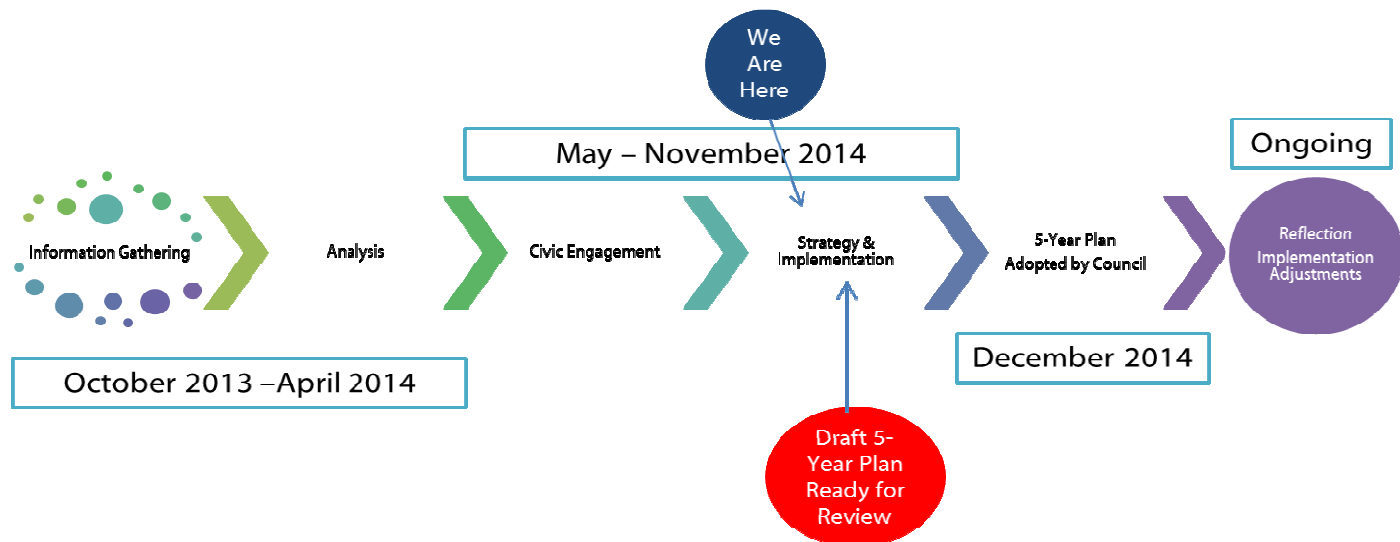
Major Highway Corridor Improvements (continued)

- **Harrison Avenue Corridor**— Land acquisition for the complete reconstruction of Harrison Avenue between 11th and 20th Street continues. Barring land acquisition issues, this project will be ready for bidding and construction by Summer 2015.
- **East State Street Corridor**— East State Street resurfacing, from Fairview to Bell School, is now complete. The reconstruction of the intersection of Bell School and E. State Street, lead by the County, is to be ready for bid hopefully by Spring next year for a 2015 construction. Due to the pedestrian safety traffic issues here, this is a high priority to complete. Street lighting for E. State Street will be included for this infrastructure project. Street lighting design will commence this Winter for the Miracle Mile section of E. State Street between Fairview and Alpine for 2015 construction. The goal is to have a uniform street light installation along the E. State Street corridor from Fairview to the Tollway over the next five years, as well as continuous pedestrian improvements along the corridor.
- **North Main Street Corridor**—The section of North Main Street from Auburn to Riverside is slated for the next large State highway reconstruction. Land acquisition is underway, along with construction plans. Overhead utility poles remain an outstanding issue that needs to be resolved, and undergrounding these utilities present the best option for long-term stability and final ultimate appearance of the corridor. It is anticipated that this work will begin some time in 2015, but with utilities, that remains uncertain.
- **11th Street Corridor (IL251)** - The resurfacing of 11th Street from US Bypass 20 to Broadway is slated to begin in the Spring 2015. A corridor planning effort has begun with an initial meeting held in November lead by Alderman Hill, staff, and business members representing 11th Street.
- **Airport Drive/Falcon Road**— The reconstruction of Falcon Road is approximately 95% complete, with final completion to occur in the Spring. The reconstruction of Airport Drive from 11th Street to Kishwaukee Street, the eastern entry into Rockford Global TradePark and Chicago-Rockford International Airport, is slated to begin in the Spring of 2015.



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Comprehensive Planning Efforts in Full Swing



The Community & Economic Development Department, lead by its Planning Division, is leading efforts to update the City's Comprehensive Plan, which is a 20 to 30 year outlook to guide the future of the City. As part of this effort, a City-wide Implementation Plan is being developed for 2015-2019, which is designed to be the guiding document for action over the next five years. The planning effort has included an exhaustive analysis and incorporation of other planning documents and plans that have been completed since 2004, including the City of Rockford's HUD Consolidated Plan/Annual Action Plan, the Rockford Park District Strategic Development Framework Plan, the Winnebago County 2030 Land Resource Management Plan, the Rockford Regional Economic Development 2010-2015 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, the Rockford Region Strategic Diversification Plan, the RMAP Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, and the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan. Another key component of the City-wide Implementation Plan is the coordination of this document with the City's five-year Capital Improvements Plan. The Implementation Plan will utilize the analysis framework designed through the Rockford Region Vital Signs plan for Sustainable Development, which provides action steps for a number of elements in the community, including transportation, energy, built environment, housing, biodiversity, education, waste, civic vitality, health, culture, land, water resources, economic development, technology, food, and safety. The end product will include goals and principles, strategies to achieving those goals and principles, action plans, performance indicators, benchmarks, timelines for implementation, and resource identification for collaborative partnerships to achieve plan goals.



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Economic Development Services - The following is a brief update on major economic development projects throughout the City:

- **North Main and Auburn Redevelopment RFP:** A recommendation for development of the southeast corner of Main and Auburn has been reviewed by the RFP review committee in November, and their recommendation will be presented to the Planning & Development Committee in December.
- **Amerock Hotel & Conference Center:** Work continues on implementation of the Development Agreement with Gorman & Co. Site planning and architectural drawings are being completed by Gorman and Company. They continue to secure equity financing with investors and vendors, including historic tax credit and EB-5 immigration through investment finance instruments. City staff is working on right-of-way vacations and land acquisition pursuant to the Development Agreement. Public Works is busy at work with IDOT on the two-way conversion of South Main Street, along with the preliminary planning of the parking deck and proposed Amtrak station. Gorman & Co. have submitted their plans through the Zoning Board of Appeals, and it has been advanced to City Council for November. A Davis Park planning committee has been formed and have been meeting to develop a long-term master plan for Davis Park as part of the project.
- **West Side Grocery:** Demolition of houses have been completed and foundation construction will begin this December to make room for a new Save-A-Lot grocery store on the northwest corner of West State Street and Central Avenue. Construction is to be completed by the end of Summer 2015.
- **123 S. Main Street RFP & 134 N Main Street RFP:** Presentation of the development proposal submitted by Joseph James Partners is scheduled to be heard by the Planning & Development Committee at their December 8th meeting.
- **Trust Building:** Morgan Management has submitted a development proposal to comprehensively redevelop the Trust Building, built in 1911 and designed by the famous Chicago architect Daniel Burnham. The building will be converted into 60 market-rate rental housing units above the proposed retail on the first floor. City staff is currently negotiating a development agreement with Morgan Management, with the goal of submitting a development agreement for City Council consideration in December.



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

Economic Development Services (continued) -

- **K's Merchandise:** City staff is currently finalizing a proposed development agreement with First Midwest Group to redevelop the former K's Merchandise building to include a multi-tenant, state-of-the art call center for Servicom. The new call center will employ up to 500 employees, and will rehabilitate a building that has stood vacant for over fifteen years. Construction has begun with the goal of having Servicom occupying the building by December of this year.
- **New Commercial Development at Mulford & E. State Street:** First Midwest Group is currently clearing the way for significant commercial development at Bienterra Trail and Mulford Village Drive. The former Pier Tone commercial building is being demolished, and will make way for a new 15,000s.f. commercial retail space. In addition, just to the west of the new commercial retail space, a 8,700s.f. Portillo's restaurant is being proposed. This has been fast-tracked through the development process, and has received City Council approval. Construction is anticipated to begin this Winter.
- **New Enterprise Zone Maps:** City staff has been developing new Enterprise Zone maps to submit to the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity. Enterprise Zones are a major economic development tool that the City utilizes to spur economic development, particularly in underserved areas or areas that are Brownfields.

Public hearings for consideration of these maps, as well as City Council approval, is scheduled for December.
- **Airport Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul Facility:** City staff is awaiting a draft Development Agreement from the Chicago-Rockford International Airport for the construction and development of the MRO facility for AAR Corporation. This is a significant economic development project that will create hundreds of jobs for our community.



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

Construction & Development Services:

- **Current Permitting Trends:** Through October, residential construction permit valuation totals \$41.3 million, up 230% from 2013, a very good sign. Most of this activity is in residential renovations. Commercial permit valuation total \$74,541,970, up 134% from 2013. Hopefully, this permit activity will result in better property valuation numbers going forward.

From a budgetary perspective, total permit fees are 102% of planned revenues. Another good sign is that the Department continues a high volume of online permits which has meant quicker revenue collection. October was the highest month ever, with 25% of the permits being online.

- **Demolition Program:** Through October, 57 demolitions have been completed
- **Neighborhood Standards:** Over 205 complaints were fielded in October, totaling 4,155 for the year. Of the 205 complaints, 45.5% were resolved with voluntary compliance, which is below our performance benchmark. Approximately 11% were resolved from the code hearing process, and 43% were resolved through forced compliance (contracting out the work). The neighborhood standards section continues to have a high caseload, and more resources are necessary to truly combat the neighborhood issues that are experienced in Rockford, particularly with the number of abandoned and vacant homes. This will have to be a point of emphasis going forward so that we can adequately address the problem. Other communities have successfully implemented a Vacant Property Registration Ordinance to address similar issues that we experience, and it is recommended that we seriously consider this for 2015 to assist with our neighborhood improvement efforts.

Other initiatives that were taken on by Neighborhood Standards in October was a code enforcement sweep of the Jackson Heights Neighborhood, with approximately 26 properties being cited for violations. Neighborhood Enforcement Specialists received valuable training in October through the American Association of Code Enforcement (AACE) National Conference.

To continue to address vacant structures, Neighborhood Standards staff completed a field audit of inactive water accounts for garbage collection billing this month as well. The new solid waste contract has been going well, and we will be providing an end-of-the year review on our progress since the new contract and service was established earlier this year.



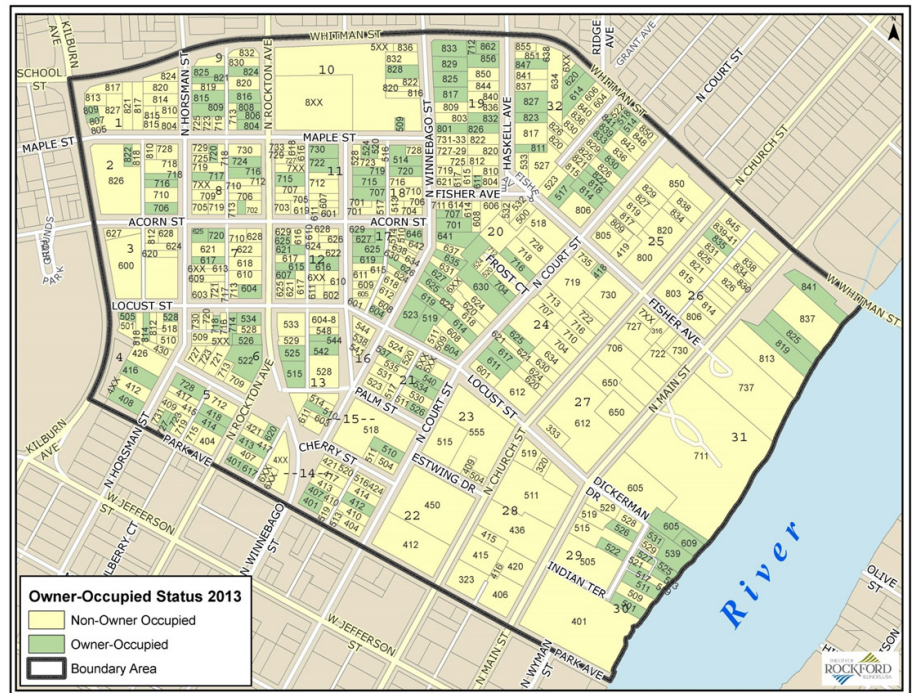
HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Homeless Coordinated Intake System to Improve Homeless Prevention Services

Effective January 2, 2015, the Community Action Agency, operated within the Rockford Human Services Department will act as the single point of entry for the Homeless Coordinated Intake and Assessment System. Through the system, a coordinated intake system will be utilized by community agencies to provide services to the homeless, including assistance with temporary and permanent housing. Participating agencies include Carpenter's Place, Rockford Rescue Mission, Shelter Care Ministries, Zion, Rockford Township, MELD, Youth Services Network, Salvation Army, Rosecrance-Ware, Rockford Housing Authority, Prairie State Legal Services, Remedies, and the Veteran's Administration.

Community Services Embarks on Coronado-Haskell Neighborhood Project

The Community Services Division is launching a Resident Leadership Academy (RLA) within the Coronado-Haskell neighborhood. This program, developed by Community Health Improvement Partners of San Diego, is a twelve-week course that empowers residents to develop and implement action plans in their neighborhoods. The RLA brings cutting-edge knowledge about how to create healthier neighborhood environments to local grassroots networks, where residents can decide for themselves how they would like to see their neighborhoods improved. RLA graduates will work with public and private institutions in their respective communities to accomplish the goals within their action plans, which aims to reduce the prevalence of poverty and chronic disease in their neighborhoods by improving public safety, education, housing, healthy food access and physical activity opportunities. Based on neighborhood feedback, as well as the action plans developed in the RLA, Community Services will provide resources and support to the neighborhood to implement their chosen empowerment activities.





HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Community Services Highlights:

Volunteer Mobilization: The expansion of community gardens throughout our neighborhoods continue to be a goal for Human Services, and this couldn't happen without the incredible work of volunteers. With the help of 439 volunteers totaling over 3500 hours, almost 4,820 pounds of food has been donated.

Community Education: Through October, 561 children have been trained in alcohol and tobacco, and other drug prevention, as well as bullying prevention. In addition, the Department trained 81 individuals through the Beverage Alcohol Sellers and Servers Education and Training (BASSET) program. This is the State of Illinois' seller/server training program, and is an educational and training tool to sellers/servers of alcoholic beverages to serve responsibly and stay within the law.

Crisis Services: Emergency assistance has been provided to 102 individuals through October, and over 181 housing nights have been provided to those individuals who were in need of temporary housing due to crisis, condemnation, or fire.

Energy/Weatherization Services: Through the Low Income Household Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), 7,312 households have been assisted, and 1,177 households have been assisted through the Energy Assistance Percentage of Payment Program. Both of these programs help low-income households with their monthly energy bills. The Department has completed 30 emergency furnace projects since the program opened in October of this year. In terms of the Weatherization program, which is designed to install energy saving improvements to homes, 63 homes were weatherized this year beginning with the program year of July 1, 2014. In the program year beginning July 1, 2013, 139 homes were weatherized. Productivity in this area has been hampered this year due to personnel changes in this area.